

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 014282

62

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 014282

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, LE, SY, EG

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION OF LEBANESE SITUATION WITH FAHMY

REF: CAIRO 678

FOR AMBASSADOR FROM SECRETARY

1. PLEASE GET IN TOUCH WITH FAHMY AND EXPLAIN THAT I HAD ASKED YOU TO DISCUSS WITH HIM THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE LEBANESE SITUATION ALONG FOLLOWING LINES:
I SHARE HIS CONCERN AS VOICED TO YOU ON THE 19TH (REFTEL) OVER THE SITUATION IN LEBANON, WHICH APPEARS TO BE ENTERING A DANGEROUS PHASE, WITH INCREASING INVOLVEMENT OF PALESTINIAN MILITIA REINFORCED FROM SYRIA AND OF - LEBANESE MILITARY.

2. THE FIGHTING OF THE PAST TWO WEEKS HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE LEBANESE SITUATION, FAR FROM MOVING TOWARD SOLUTION, IS POSING A PROGRESSIVELY GREATER THREAT TO
SECRET

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PAGE 02 STATE 014282

PEACE IN THE AREA. THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE RECENT

FIGHTING, WHICH HAS FORCED A TOTAL HALT TO MEDIATION AND COMPROMISE EFFORTS, SEEM TO INDICATE THAT GROUPS ON BOTH SIDES ARE FURTHER HARDENING THEIR POSITIONS.

3. WE ARE DISTURBED BY SIGNS THAT SENTIMENT FOR PARTITION AMONG AT LEAST THE MILITANT CHRISTIANS IS GROWING AND THAT THEIR MILITARY MOVES MAY BE AIMED AT SPEEDING UP DE FACTO PARTITION. EQUALLY DISTURBING IS THE EVIDENCE THAT THE PALESTINIANS HAVE PUT THEIR PRESTIGE AND MILITARY CREDIBILITY ON THE LINE PUBLICLY AND THAT THE MODERATE LEADERS AMONG THEM MAY BE HAVING TROUBLE IN CONTROLLING THOSE FOLLOWERS OF THEIRS WHO HAVE NO INTEREST IN THE PLO PROJECTING A MODERATE IMAGE TO THE WORLD.

4. KARAME'S RESIGNATION IS AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE DESPAIR WHICH THE MODERATES SENSE IN TRYING TO WREST CONTROL OF THE SITUATION FROM THE MILITANTS AND EXTREMISTS. WE HAVE TRIED THROUGH GUIDANCE TO OUR PRESS SPOKESMEN (SEPTTEL) AND IN PRIVATE MESSAGE TO ENCOURAGE KARAME TO REMAIN IN OFFICE AT THIS CRITICAL JUNCTURE, SINCE WE SEE NO OTHER MUSLIM CANDIDATE FOR THE PRIMIN'S JOB WITH HIS AUTHORITY AND PRESTIGE, AND EXPERIENCE IN PATCHING UP PROBLEMS.

5. AS FAHMY KNOWS, THIS TREND CARRIES WITH IT SERIOUS RISKS OF DRAWING IN SYRIA AND ISRAEL, WITH THE ATTENDANT DANGERS THAT WAR WOULD ENSUE AND THREATEN THE PROGRESS THAT WE TOGETHER HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE SINCE 1973.

6. WE ARE IN TOUCH AGAIN TODAY WITH BOTH ISRAEL AND SYRIA CONCERNING THE DANGERS AND TO WARN AGAINST INTERVENTION, IN AN EFFORT TO PREVENT THINGS FROM GETTING OUT OF HAND. A FUNDAMENTAL REVERSAL OF THE CURRENT TREND IS NEEDED WHICH WOULD START MOVEMENT TOWARD COMPROMISE AND CONCILIATION.

7. WE APPRECIATE THE EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE PACIFICATION AND RECENT STATEMENTS BY PRESIDENT SADAT, FAHMY HIMSELF, AND OTHER EGYPTIAN SPOKESMEN. WE JOIN EGYPT IN ITS
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 014282

OPPOSITION TO UNILATERAL ARAB OR NON-ARAB INTERFERENCE IN LEBANON, AND OUR RECENT STATEMENTS ON THAT POINT HAVE PARALLELED EGYPT'S.

8. WE WOULD VALUE FAHMY'S VIEWS ON HOW HE SEES THE SITUATION DEVELOPING, AND ON WHAT MORE HE BELIEVES CAN BE DONE. SISCO

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